

## ARMY SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL TRAINING, ALDERSHOT

### CLOSE COMBAT

#### 1. OBJECT

To kill the enemy at close quarters, or under certain conditions to overpower or disable him. Hand to hand fighting requires in its stark reality, the skill to fight and kill even with the bare hands. A practical knowledge of Close Combat enables a soldier to accomplish this successfully although opposed to an armed enemy, when he himself may be completely unarmed.

With the vast extension in mechanized warfare, the opportunities to indulge in this form of fighting have greatly increased, and the after dark tank hunting raids, which have become a feature of modern war, offer great scope to the skillful exponent of Close Combat.

#### 2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Before going into detail and method there are some general principles to be learned and remembered.

Unlike boxing, there are no rules in Close Combat. You are up against a ruthless enemy who has been taught and trained to employ every possible means to kill you. Remember, therefore, that it is your life or his, so do not hesitate to put him out of action as quickly as possible, regardless of the means employed.

Attack is the best form of defense, so be on the attack or ready for it al all times. In Close Combat the essentials of successful attack are surprise, speed, determination and ruthlessness.

An armed man will always have the advantage over an unarmed man provided he thoroughly understands his weapon, but do not allow the fact that you are unarmed to disturb your confidence, because there are many ways in which you can get the better of the enemy, in spite of his weapon.

If you find yourself disarmed and facing a man with a rifle, Tommy gun or revolver, you can be pretty sure that for some reason or other he does not wish to shoot - maybe he has no ammunition, or perhaps the weapon has jammed, or gain he may not wish to make any noise - whatever the reason the fact that he does not shoot should give you the confidence.

Always aim to get within arms length of an armed opponent and then get closer still. The closer you are the less chance he has to use his weapon effectively.

In Close Combat there is no such thing as defense, there is only attack and counter-attack. Your counter may contain a defensive movement, but only as part of your counter-attack. A properly executed attack consists of no defense.

The soldier must first be taught the vulnerable points of the body and then to decide quickly which of those is the most easily accessible according to the dress and position of his opponent. These vulnerable points are:

- (a) In front - the point of the chin; the front and sides of the throat, fork, knees, insteps, and the solar plexus
- (b) Behind - the base of the skull, kidneys, spine and fork.

### 3. APPLICATION

the spirit of attack should be kept alive throughout the training. To achieve this in the early stages, the instructor should follow the sequence of attack and counter-attack as detailed.

The various movements should be practiced carefully and slowly at first, working up later to full speed - speed and surprise are the keys to success. In the early stages, the lessons should be carried out in gym and sports kit, later working up to full battle orders. All movements should be practiced on both sides to be able to deal effectively with either a right or left handed opponent. To attain proficiency and self-reliance frequent practice is essential.

### 4. ATTACKS

#### i) Unarmed

- a) The Chin Jab - A sharp upward blow delivered with the heel of the hand, with the weight of the body behind it, under the opponent's chin, the fingers being spread and slightly bent, so that they may strike the opponent's eyes or nose.
- b) Edge of the Hand Blow - Delivered with the inner (i.e. little finger) edge of the hand, using that part opposite the base of the thumb, the fingers being kept straight and close together, the thumb extended as far as possible. The blow is delivered from the elbow with a chopping action.
- c) The Knee Blow - A vigorous blow with the knee to the fork or solar plexus.
- d) The Kick - Always kick with the sole of the feet. To do this turn slightly to one side, draw the knee well into the body, then shoot the leg out straight, leaning away from your opponent to maintain balance and obtain a longer reach. The exception to this rule is when you are close to your opponent or attacking from behind when the toe of the boot may be used effectively.
- e) The Stamp - Scrape the outer edge of either boot sharply down either of your opponent's shins, finishing up with a vigorous stamp on his instep. If he is not wearing a top boot, a crape on his shin will be most painful, but the stamp on his instep is the most important part of the blow and will be very effective even though he is wearing a heavy rubber or leather top boot.
- f) The K.O. Punch - To the boxer a strong left punch to the mark and right to the point will K.O. the strongest opponent and may be used if opportunity occurs, but to the

novice in boxing the "edge of the Hand blow" described above is easier to learn and more effective.

g) Forearm Attack - Strike with the inside of the forearm from behind viciously across the throat and place the corresponding foot between the opponents feet. Drive your hip into his back bringing him off his balance and at the same time transfer the free hand to the other hand, which should remain extended with the palm downward, Step backward bringing your opponent on to your thigh, at the same time force the shoulder into the back of his head.

When dealing with a taller or an equipped opponent, approach him from behind and, at a distance of about three feet dive with arms extended over his shoulders and simultaneously apply the hold and force your hips into his back as your feet contact the ground.

h) Low Rugby Kick - a vigorous low Rugby tackle from any direction consists of a swift dive at an opponent's legs, which must be clutched together firmly. The impetus of the dive causes him to lose his balance and the legs being held together prevent him from regaining it. This movement can be practiced on a dummy such as a weighted sack filled with sawdust or sand and suspended just clear of the ground. This attack should chiefly be used against an opponent who is running away from you.

i) Ankle and Shoulder Throw - When attacking an opponent from the rear when silence is not essential, adopt a kneeling position on one knee, the forward foot being in line with the space between his feet. Grasp his ankles with cupped hands, hold and simultaneously force the shoulder into his buttocks, whip the legs outwards and backwards and come to the standing position. This throws your opponent on to his face and you follow through with a kick to the fork. The advantage of this attack is that you retain your feet whilst your opponent is brought to the ground.

ii) Armed

a) With a cosh, truncheon or similar weapon - The best results are achieved by blows to the front and sides of the neck; the base of the skull and the point of the shoulder. Do not strike straight downwards on top of your opponent's helmet, but downwards and inwards at the neck in the angle of head and shoulder.

b) With a knife - The correct way to hold the knife is as follows: The handle should be gripped with the thumb and forefinger against the guard, the remaining fingertips being pressed against the rest of the handle.

i) Attacking a sentry from behind

a) Stalk quietly, place one hand on his nose and mouth pulling his head to the side and then thrust the knife into his neck by the main artery below the ear, and cut backwards. There should be at least three inches penetration with the knife.

b) Execute the same movements as in (a) above, but drive the knife into his kidneys. Pull him backward onto the blade and at the same time force your hips forward to assist penetration.

ii) Attacking a sentry from the front

- a) Fake feinting movements then thrust for a vulnerable point, preferably his stomach
- b) Slashes to the neck and arms are useful attacks if it is impenetrable to get in a direct thrust
- c) With a Steel Helmet The steel helmet can be used with great effect as a weapon of defense, as well as serving its usual role as a means of protection. When kept on the head it can be used to deal a vicious blow, either by butting, or with a quick jerk of the head forward or backward so that the rim strikes your opponent's face. Similarly, it can be used in the hand either as a shield or as a means of delivering a blow with its edge. For this purpose it should be held with the thumb uppermost on the brim and the fingers inside it.

## 5. DISARMS and COUNTER ATTACKS

### a) Rifle and Bayonet

i) Remember that your opponent is either unwilling or unable to shoot. We will almost certainly come at you with his rifle fixed firmly in line with your body. Go towards him if you can, this will in itself put him off a bit - and when you are within a few feet and ready for your attack, throw whatever you may have in your hand at his face - anything will do, even a packet of papers or a notebook. Whatever it is will make him blink and distract his attention for just a fraction of time, and in that split second you must jump in and get inside his bayonet point, and so to close quarters. As you go in, you must parry his rifle and bayonet sharply to your left - on no account parry it in such a way as to bring the rifle between you and your opponent. Don't go for the weapon - go for the man. Strike on edge of hand blow at neck or throat, or apply the chin jab or knee to fork, and then follow up with other kicks or blows.  
ii) When opponent attacks, deflect his bayonet to your left, but if he is left handed then deflect to your right. Counter attack immediately as in (i) above. If he is attacking, he will be on your after the parry when the knee to fork or chin jab will prove most effective.

### b) Revolver or Tommy Gun in front

It is only possible to attempt the movements described below when opponent threatens you with the weapon at close range.

Remember that a man who holds you up with a revolver or Tommy gun is not a killer. Otherwise he would shoot you without hesitation and search you afterwards. He does not shoot, mainly because he does not wish to raise an alarm or perhaps he wishes to take you alive. He cannot run the risk of your having a concealed weapon, and, therefore, is sure to tell you to put your hands above your head. Finally, in order to search you, he must come within reach of your hands.

The unexpectedness of finding himself attacked by an apparently defenseless person will so surprise him that it will be the simplest thing possible to disarm him before he knows what is happening. Note that the time is in your favor. Wait for the opportunity that will surely come, and meanwhile bluff for all you are worth. Talk to him, pretend to be frightened, and when he is off guard - not till then - attack.

Held up from in front

Your assailant gives the order "Hands Up" and covers you by pointing the weapon at your stomach. Hold your hands above you head fairly wide apart, keeping the arms fully relaxed, and lead your opponent to suppose you are scared. The reason for keeping the hands apart is that your opponent cannot lock two objects at the same time, and keeping the arms relaxed permits of speedier action. If he is watching your left hand, use your right, if the right, use the left; should he be looking at your body or face, use either. Should it be too dark for you to see which hand he is looking at, use which you think best; he will not be expecting any attack.

i) Revolver - When he is close enough to you, with a quick downward swing seize his right hand, simultaneously turning rapidly sideways towards your left-hand side. This will knock the revolver outwards past your body.

Seize the revolver immediately with your left hand as close as possible, bend it outwards and break his trigger finger and knee him in the fork. Follow up by releasing your grip with your right hand and deliver a chin jab.

ii) Tommy Gun - The distance of attack, swing of the arm and turn the body as in (1) above. Parry with your right hand the left hand of your assailant, close in quickly and follow up with one or more disabling blows. After closing in, the left hand should be used to prevent the Tommy Gun being swung back to the attack.

c) Revolver

i) Should your assailant cover you by holding a revolver or Tommy Gun in small of your back:

Hold up your hands over your head and exhibit fear. Glance over your shoulder and make sure that your assailant really has a revolver in your back and find out in which hand he is holding it. For the sake of clarity, assume that he is holding it in his right hand, which will be usual.

Turning rapidly inwards towards your left side, swing your left arm down, over and around your assailant's right forearm, or barrel of Tommy Gun holding it with a firm grip of your left arm against the left side of your body, simultaneously knee him in the fork with your right knee and chin jab him with your right hand.

Keep a firm grip with your left hand in your assailant's right arm or barrel of Tommy Gun, so that it will be impossible for him to shoot you or release his arm or gun and as previously stated, the shock from the blow on the fork, or even the "chin-jab" will cause him immediately to release his hold on the weapon.

ii) If it is not convenient to turn towards your left side, the following alternative method can be employed:

Turning rapidly outwards towards your right side, swing your right arm down and pass your right hand over and around your assailant's revolver forearm, or the forward hand on the Tommy Gun, holding it firmly against your body with the pressure of your arm. Simultaneously strike him on edge of the hand blow on the Adam's Apple with your left hand.

d) Knife or Bayonet

Counter attack by means of a vicious attack.

Should you get the chance, take off your steel helmet and use it as a shield. In any case, be prepared to deal an edge of the hand blow to the forearm of the hand in which he is holding the knife, and follow up with a chin jab or other disabling blow. Whatever counter you use always be ready to distract his attention by throwing something at his face.

e) Truncheon or Cosh

If attacked by an assailant jump in close to avoid the full force of the blow and use a chin jab or knee to fork.

If he is on the defensive, be prepared to use your steel helmet as a shield, and also watch for a chance to disable him with a blow on the forearm of the hand in which he is holding the weapon.

## 6. RELEASES and COUNTER ATTACK

i) When held from in front

a) Wrist Release - Should an opponent seize one or both wrists effect release by bending your arm or arms suddenly towards your body and turn it on them in the direction of his thumb or thumbs. Follow up with one or more disabling blows.

b) Counter attack to front strangle hold - Bend knees and swing right arm over your opponent's arms, the top of your arm coming into contact with his left wrist; turn quickly to the left and catch his right arm with your left just above the wrist. Then turning quickly to the right, hit your opponent on the jaw with your right elbow and finish with a knee blow to the fork with your left leg.

c) When gripped round the waist. If gripped round the waist from in front over the arms, bring your knees suddenly and violently into your opponent's form or use a shin-scrape and stamp on his instep. Either of these will make him relax his grip sufficiently to allow you to free your arms, after which you can use the chin jab or edge of hand blow.

d) When clothing or equipment is held. Counter attack with any disabling blow as described in Para. 4.

ii) When held from behind

a) Held over arms - If wearing a steel helmet, smash your head vigorously backward. Immediately you are free, turn and counter-attack by the quickest and most effective method as described in Para. 4.

b) Stranglehold (Hand or Forearms). Deliver a violent blow with the point of the right elbow to opponent's stomach or lower ribs, or grab his testicles. Either of these will cause him to relax his hold. When this has been effected, turn to the right and counter-attack with the most effective disabling blows, or apply an arm lock by passing your right arm under opponent's right arm just above the elbow and at the same time, place your left hand on opponent's wrist and complete the turn to the right.

## 7. SEARCHING AN OPPONENT

a) When a wall is available

Make your opponent place both hands on the side of the wall, and his feet astride as far back as he can. In this position he is unbalanced and any movement he may make

is easily seen; furthermore, his feet can be knocked away from him should he attempt to get away.

b) In the open

Hold him down as described in 9.

## 8. MARCHING OFF AN OPPONENT

a) If you are armed with Rifle and Bayonet - Make him raise his arms and, if possible, interlock his fingers at the back of his neck. Keep your bayonet point about one yard clear behind his back and if he won't move on, don't on any account attempt to prod him on with the point - carry your rifle in the high port position and then kick him on the buttocks until he does move on. If he should make any move to turn or attack, bring your bayonet down with a slash at the angle of neck and shoulder. If you carry your bayonet too close to him he has only to turn sharply and sweep it on one side - your shot will go wide by several feet.

b) If you are armed with a Revolver - Make him put his arms as in (a) above. Keep your revolver close to your side, and if he won't move on push him with your free hand, with the arms extended on the corresponding shoulder (i.e. left hand on left shoulder), keeping the revolver well back ready to fire. Persuasion with the toe of the boot will be found very effective, particularly on the calf of the leg.

c) If you are armed with a Tommy Gun - Make him put his arms as in (a) above. Keep the muzzle of the gun at least one yard clear of his back of if he won't move on, don't on any account attempt to prod him with the weapon, use the toe of your boot on his buttocks, or calf of the leg.

d) If you are armed with a Truncheon or Cosh - Make him put his arms as in (a) above. Keep the cosh raised over your shoulder ready to strike, and if he won't move on, grasp his corresponding shoulder firmly with your free hand at the full extent of the arm (i.e. left hand on left shoulder), and push him forward, keeping the cosh well up and back in the other hand ready to strike. If you have to strike, do so downwards and inwards at the junction of neck and shoulder. Should the cosh glance off his helmet, head or shoulder, follow on immediately with a return blow, a horizontal direction at his shoulder or neck.

e) if you are armed with a knife - Proceed as for revolver, and be ready to strike upwards, not downwards, at the small of the back under the ribs.

f) If you are unarmed

i) Face your opponent and seize his right wrist with both hands, right above left. Jerk his arm violently downwards so as to produce a considerable shock, amounting almost to a knock-out, which will bring him into a receptive mood. Then swing his arm up to shoulder height so as to force him off balance. Pass quickly under his arm, turning left about and maintain a firm grip with your hands on his wrist. Step to his back with our left foot and with a circular upward motion force his wrist well up his back. Retain your grip with your left hand and seize his right elbow with your right. Bond his wrist towards his right shoulder and lift upwards with your right hand on his elbow. When you have got your opponent in this position, place your left hand on the back of his right hand and grip his right thumb. Then move his right hand downwards

and to the front, retaining your grip on it and exerting pressure on his wrist by pulling with your left hand and pushing upwards with your right hand on his elbow. This is called the Thumb and Elbow hold.

ii) Seize his clothing at the right elbow with the right hand and pull his elbow across your body. At the same time, slip your left arm between his arm and body below the elbow, locking his arm behind his back, with your left hand gripping his arm above the elbow almost at the shoulder joint. His elbow is then forced downwards by your right hand towards your stomach. Your right hand should then be used to keep him close to you, by gripping the clothing or equipment on the shoulder or holding his hair. In this movement make sure that his weight is on his right foot and not evenly distributed.

## 9. HOW TO HOLD AN OPPONENT DOWN

If you have your opponent down and you want to keep him quiet for a while without tying him up, put him flat on his face and bend both his legs backward, locking his left foot behind his right knee. Place your left knee on his left foreleg and fit his right foot into your left groin applying pressure onto his foot with the weight of your body.

## 10. CONCLUSION

You will see from the foregoing instructions that however desperate your situation may be, there is always a good chance of turning the tables on your opponent - of turning apparent defeat into victory.

Don't forget to study your opponent's clothing and equipment before making up your mind what you are going to try and do - it may be that his kit will prevent you using certain blows - for instance, a steel helmet may protect the back of the neck but not the throat.

Finally, as Shakespeare says:

"BE BLOODY, BOLD AND RESOLUTE"

## S U M M A R Y

1. OBJECT
2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES
3. APPLICATION
4. ATTACKS
  - i. (Unarmed)
    - a. Chin Jab (Practice on pad or sack).
    - b. Edge of hand blow (Practice on pad or sack).
    - c. Knee blow
    - d. The kick (Fork - Stomach - Leg).
    - e. The stamp

- f. The K.O. Punch (K.O. Punch to Mark and Point).
  - g. Forearm attack on sentry from behind.
  - h. Low Rugby Tackle (man or sack).
  - i. Ankle and Shoulder throw.
- ii. (Armed)
  - a. Truncheon or Cosh blow at neck
  - b. Knife, attacking sentry (from front and behind)
  - c. Helmet blow

5. DISARMS AND COUNTER ATTACKS

- a. Rifle and Bayonet (2 ways).
- b. Revolver or Tommy Gun from front.
- c. Revolver or Tommy Gun from behind. (2 ways).
- d. Knife or Bayonet.
- e. Truncheon or Cosh.

6. RELEASES and COUNTER ATTACKS

- i. From in Front
  - a. Wrist Hold (emphasis against the thumb).
  - b. Strangle hold.
  - c. Held round waits over arms.
  - d. Clothing or equipment hold.
- ii. From Behind
  - a. Round waist over arms
  - b. Strangle hold with hands or forearm

7. SEARCHING AN OPPONENT

- a. With a wall available
- b. In the open

8. MARCHING OFF AN OPPONENT

- a. Armed with Rifle and Bayonet (use as knife).
- b. Armed with Revolver.
- c. Armed with Tommy Gun.
- d. Armed with Truncheon or stick.
- e. Armed with knife (see Bayonet).
- f. Unarmed (2 ways).

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